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ABSTRACT

This framework was developed using results of a 1995 business partnership survey, a survey of over 9,000 Albertans (800 responses), and discussion of recommendations by a forum of approximately 140 Albertans. The surveys and discussion focused on ways in which business and schools could work together to provide the best possible education for young people. This framework sets out seven projects: (1) create community structures; (2) promote workplace learning; (3) encourage apprenticeships; (4) enhance lifelong career education; (5) review school programs and standards; (6) develop credentials for a global economy; and (7) provide legislative and policy support. Each project is described, and an action plan is proposed that recommends both immediate steps and longer term suggestions toward the year 2000. Appendixes include the business involvement advisory group member list and ethical guidelines for business-education partnerships. (YLB)

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FRAMEWORK

FOR ENHANCING

BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

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- *Business Involvement in Education Literature Review*
- *Business Involvement in Education: Public Consultation Findings*
- *Creating Independent and Interdependent Learners: Business and Education Working Together*
- *Partnerships Survey Report, 1995: School–Business Partnerships in Alberta*
- *Proceedings Report: Invitational Forum on Business Involvement in Education*
- *Technical Appendix Business Involvement in Education: Public Consultation Findings*

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BUILDING ON THE PRESENT: INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

We have an excellent education system in this province; it is an essential building block of our society's future. At the same time, we must continue to look ahead to what our children and grandchildren will need for success in the world of today and tomorrow. We must ensure that all Albertans participate in the province's prosperity and quality of life.

With today's rapidly changing environment, Alberta businesses and industries must be able to compete in markets around the world. Our young people must have the skills they need for the opportunities and challenges of the global economy.

We can, and we must, shape the future by setting clear priorities and taking actions to achieve our goals. We must ensure that our education system is achieving the results we want for our young people and giving them the skills they need to grow and succeed.

ASKING ALBERTANS

"The MLA Implementation Team on Business Involvement and Technology Integration was established to allow students, schools, business, employers and the community at large to benefit from closer working relationships in preparing Alberta students to meet the challenges of the future."

90th Annual Report 1994–1995, Alberta Education.

An important step in setting directions for change was to consult with Albertans. In March 1994, an MLA Team on Business Involvement and Technology Integration (Denis Herard, MLA, Calgary Egmont, Chair; Hung Pham, MLA, Calgary Montrose) began talking with Albertans about the ways in which business and schools could work together to provide the best possible education for our young people. A representative group of Albertans from the business and education communities provided input and advice to assist the MLA Team. See Appendix A: Business Involvement Advisory Group Members. They received reports about current provincial and local projects involving business in education, reviewed the results of a 1995 Business Partnership Survey, and considered a variety of national and international information on business involvement in schools. A questionnaire was sent to over 9000 Albertans and about 800 responses were received. This consultation process resulted in a number of documents, including a draft report with recommendations that was presented to a forum of 140 Albertans in January 1996.

Albertans commented on many topics related to business involvement in education. They stressed that our education system must help all young people to prepare for the world of work and for lifelong learning in a complex world. Some noted that schools are starting to introduce some excellent programs, including the Career and Technology Studies program and the related Registered Apprenticeship Program. There is also a significant level of cooperation between Alberta schools and businesses[1] that provides students with some workplace learning. **But Albertans said a stronger relationship between education and business could give more students the "real-life" experiences they need to develop necessary workplace skills.**

Albertans also told the MLA Team that enrollments in Career and Technology Studies, and similar programs, will increase when students and their parents view them as essential components of our education system. Our society needs to place more value on the trade, service and technical careers. Parents and students require more information about these careers. They also need to know about the changing labour market and the increasing importance of the "knowledge worker."[2]

A majority of Albertans told the MLA Team that all students need opportunities to acquire a wide range of skills and work habits for success in the rapidly changing, high-tech, global economy. These broad or general skills, such as the ability to communicate, assume responsibility and have a positive attitude toward lifelong learning, were given a higher priority than job-specific skills. However, there was also some support for providing basic, job-readiness training for all students.

As they talked with Albertans, the MLA Team heard about an increased need for high-quality career planning so students are able to make better decisions about their future and the school programs that will help them to achieve their individual goals. The Team was told that this is especially important for the many students who go directly into the workplace. These

[1] Throughout this paper, business is defined broadly to include private, for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, and public sector employers (that is, all employers, including organizations involving volunteer workers).

[2] "Knowledge workers" are people who are extensively involved in the ongoing process of using information technology to collect data, analyze information and communicate knowledge to their coworkers and customers.

students need a solid career plan to make the transition from school to work. Schools and students need support from employers to offer more effective counselling and career preparation programs.

A majority of educators surveyed (over 75 per cent), and some employers, (about 45 per cent), felt that there is a lack of common understanding among employers about their expectations of the education system. Albertans believe that closer links between business and education would improve career preparation, expand workplace learning and help young Albertans develop employability and entrepreneurship skills.

The MLA Team focused on elementary and secondary schools, but many Albertans noted that the above ideas and directions for change also apply to the post-secondary education system in Alberta. They said that more joint planning between Alberta Education and Advanced Education and Career Development could help young people, and employers as students move from one level of education to the next. Business and employer involvement, and workplace learning opportunities, should be available at all levels and areas of education to ensure that programs are as relevant and practical as possible.

WHAT WE ARE DOING

We have reviewed the report and recommendations of the MLA Team and the comments of Albertans. We will use these proposals to build upon our high quality education system. On the basis of what we have heard and learned, we have prepared a framework for business involvement in education. This framework will ensure that students are well prepared for workplace and career opportunities now, and in the future. Parts of the framework are longer term but will be carried out over the next few years, taking into consideration the fiscal priorities established by government. Other actions set out in the framework will occur immediately—in 1996–97.

During the consultation process, Albertans stressed that extensive, community-based involvement was essential to ensure that new directions address the priorities of people throughout the province. The government will provide some leadership and support for these plans, but Albertans will play a key role in ensuring that initiatives meet local needs and wishes.

PROJECTS TO ENHANCE BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

The framework sets out seven projects:

- Create Community Structures
- Promote Workplace Learning
- Encourage Apprenticeships
- Enhance Lifelong Career Education
- Review School Programs and Standards
- Develop Credentials for a Global Economy
- Provide Legislative and Policy Support.

PROJECT — CREATE COMMUNITY STRUCTURES

Employers and educators share many common goals. They want our young people to have the support and encouragement they need to prepare for the opportunities of the future. In some parts of the province, there is already a significant level of cooperation between schools and businesses that provides students with some workplace learning. For example, about 10 per cent of Alberta high school students complete Work Experience 15–25–35. While most of these arrangements focus on a limited number of students and businesses in a community, there are some broadly-based projects involving several school systems, schools and businesses. Cooperative efforts like the Calgary Educational Partnerships Foundation and Careers . . . The Next Generation[9] provide excellent models for future growth. However, to the greatest extent possible, all students should have equitable opportunity for workplace learning and career preparation regardless of where they live in the province.

"The relationship between the basic institutions—school, workplace, and government—must be woven into a new pattern. Where there has been isolation, there must now be direct communication. Where there has been suspicion and distance, there must now be trust and close cooperation. And where there has been benign neglect, there must now be impartial analysis and swift action."

Making the Grade,
Governor John R. McKernan, Jr., 1994.

A recent survey indicated that about 70 per cent of employers were satisfied with involvement in decision-making at the school level while about half of employers were satisfied with their involvement at the school board level. Most respondents (80 per cent of employers and nearly 70 per cent of educators) felt that employers should be more extensively involved in education. About 70 per cent of all respondents said that government should pursue initiatives to increase employer involvement in education. Most employers wanted

[9] For further information contact Careers . . . The Next Generation, 1410, 10235–101 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T5J 3G1; and the Calgary Educational Partnerships Foundation, 2800, 605–5 Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 3H5.

a group or organization to represent them in the education community, and over 75 per cent supported the establishment of regional networks involving schools and the business community. Such cooperation would foster the sharing of ideas, development of partnerships at the local or grass-roots level, and equitable support for students throughout the province.

Government, business and educators must work closely to set up the structures and networks that will enhance communication and assist in promoting and coordinating business–education partnerships and workplace learning opportunities throughout the province.

ACTION PLAN

Immediate Steps

- Alberta Education and Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development will continue to support the Careers . . . The Next Generation project in 1996–97. This project helps to increase awareness of career opportunities through career and technology studies, the Registered Apprenticeship Program, work-based learning sites; and trades, apprenticeship or intern programs. It also focuses on enhancing the effectiveness of community-based education and business partnerships.

Toward the Year 2000

- Government will work with business to establish a provincial Career Education Foundation. The Foundation could be modeled on the Science Alberta Foundation. It would assume, on a more ongoing basis, some of the partnership facilitative functions currently being carried out through the Careers . . . The Next Generation project. For example, the Foundation could encourage the establishment of community-based business and education advisory groups composed of representatives from several local schools, school councils, and business groups. These community based groups could address potential inequities by providing a bridge at the community level between schools and business. The community groups would define their roles based on local needs. However, the advisory groups could:

    - facilitate partnership arrangements between individual businesses and schools

- assist with career development for students—promoting the value of all potential careers, bearing in mind the expected marketplace demands
- coordinate the sharing of technological equipment between businesses and schools within a community
- coordinate workplace learning opportunities for all educational institutions in the community
- work with communities to address issues (such as setting guidelines to balance students' part-time work with achievement in their school program)
- help businesses to assess student learning at the work site
- provide "speaker lists" and assist in organizing career fairs
- recognize local achievements and successes.

The proposed Career Education Foundation might also:

- assist in promoting the value and importance of all careers, including those requiring university degrees, those requiring one- or two-year post-secondary diplomas, and those which individuals enter directly and obtain qualifications and experience while working
- act as a "clearinghouse" for the distribution of ideas and concepts about businesses and schools working in partnership. There may also be a requirement for assisting with the allocation of resources
- assist with the linking of schools with businesses using technology, in those instances where schools or businesses wish to be "partnered" but no school/business exists in the local community, or an inadequate variety of businesses exists
- act as a network among community-based, business–education groups so that these groups can learn from each other. Part of this function could be the convening of an annual conference to serve as a forum for discussion of issues relating to business

involvement in education and for showcasing effective local practices

- facilitate information sharing about what is happening in other provinces, as well as at the national and international levels; e.g., the Conference Board of Canada

- identify schools that do not have partnerships, and encourage business/employers to be more proactive in establishing partnerships

- recognize high schools that exhibit high performance in preparing students for school-to-work transitions

- establish and administer a "Blue Ribbon" award program for businesses that are exemplary in providing workplace learning sites or otherwise supporting education

- coordinate employment exchanges or secondments for teachers and business employees at a community level

- explore how the sharing of technological equipment among schools, and between schools and businesses, could be maximized

- consider the possibility of creating a business sponsored and administered technology investment fund that would support the purchase of technological equipment, and staff inservice needed by schools, to deliver programs that could assist students in becoming "knowledge workers."

■ Alberta Education asks:

- That the Alberta Teachers' Association encourage its members to become members of community groups likely to represent a cross section of employers; e.g., local Chambers of Commerce, Rotary Clubs, etc.

- That business, employers and their organizations solicit educators as members.

- That businesses, employers and their organizations encourage their employees and members to become

involved in education. This could include having each organization identify a partnership contact person.

- That Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development, and Alberta Economic Development and Tourism also consider how a distinct, coordinated, organizational presence could support the advancement of entrepreneurship awareness and training in Alberta. This could be linked to the proposed Career Education Foundation, as well as other entrepreneurial development activities and organizations. Such an initiative would provide support to educators involved with entrepreneurship and business awareness. It could also advance the activities of other nonprofit organizations participating in various aspects of entrepreneurship and business education. The development of a comprehensive information bank of exemplary entrepreneurship initiatives, programs and models could comprise part of this support.

PROJECT — PROMOTE WORKPLACE LEARNING

A June 1995 survey showed that about 70 per cent of employers and 60 per cent of the general public felt that high school graduates are prepared for post-secondary education; however, only about 35 per cent of employers and 40 per cent of the public believed that graduates are prepared for the workplace. During the consultation process with the MLA Team, 74 per cent of respondents said that high school students who do not plan to attend a post-secondary institution should have basic, job-readiness training; and nearly the same number of Albertans (72 per cent) indicated that basic job-readiness training should be provided for all high school students. Over 80 per cent of those surveyed gave a high priority to having young people develop the competence to respond to the opportunities and expectations of the world of work.

"The engagement of private employers and worker organizations in the training of youth distinguishes the European approach . . . Europeans accept teenagers as part of the mainstream workforce . . . both as workers and learners."

School-to-Work Transition in the U.S.: The Case of the Missing Social Partners, 1994.

Some Albertans also expressed concern about part-time work noting that most part-time jobs are often simple, repetitive activities offering limited learning opportunity. Most felt that employers would be prepared to help educators make students' learning a higher priority than part-time employment. The preferred strategy was for employers to recognize and reward school achievement. Schools and businesses could also cooperate so students' work activities help them to learn

employability skills and do not have a negative effect on school learning. While a variety of approaches are possible, employers, educators and parents would need to work together closely to encourage an appropriate balance among time students spend on school work, part-time work and recreational activities.

ACTION PLAN

Immediate Steps

- Alberta Education will continue to encourage school boards and schools to implement alternative forms of student scheduling that facilitate workplace learning and differing learning styles. Alberta Education will also facilitate flexible forms of scheduling by introducing additional administration times for diploma examinations.

Toward the Year 2000

- Alberta Education will work with business and school systems in expanding workplace learning.
- Alberta Education asks:
  - That school systems encourage all senior high school students to engage in at least one workplace learning experience.
  - That business organizations, in cooperation with Alberta Education, encourage employers to acknowledge successful high school work experience as one criterion for selection of first time job applicants.
  - That business organizations, in cooperation with Alberta Education, encourage employers to take into account a student's school learning progress in the part-time employment of nongraduates under age 18.
  - That business organizations encourage employers to provide part-time student workers with as much breadth of experience as possible.

PROJECT

"Advice on employment skills must be sought and incorporated into the educational curriculum . . . the use of 'Business Advisory Boards' could be expanded and applied to a broader segment of education. As well, the application of the Apprenticeship Training Program might well be extended to a larger segment of the educational system."

School-to-Work Transition, Alberta Chamber of Commerce Education Task Force, 1995.

ENCOURAGE APPRENTICESHIPS

Alberta students now have the opportunity to participate in the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP), but enrollment is quite low—in 1994–95, less than 200 students took advantage of the RAP. This program is tied to a larger system of apprenticeship, which is limited to 50 trades—compared with approximately 400 in most European countries. European countries also have strong linkages between school-based learning and workplace learning.

While only about 40 per cent of Albertans surveyed placed a high priority on having schools provide job-specific skills for all students, expansion of RAP and the development of other youth apprenticeship programs would provide more students with the opportunity to develop a set of skills that would provide a good foundation for a specific career following graduation.

ACTION PLAN

Immediate Steps

- Alberta Education, Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development and the Apprenticeship Board and Committees will continue to review and align the requirements of academic and career and technology studies courses with apprenticeship trade entry requirements.

Toward the Year 2000

- Alberta Education and Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development will consider establishing a youth career program in addition to the Registered Apprenticeship Program. The program would apply to occupations other than the present 50 apprenticeable trades. It would link and integrate school site and work site learning. It would provide a "seamless transition" from high school to one- and two-year college and technical programs.

- Alberta Education asks that the Apprenticeship Board examine the reasons for limited availability of entry-level positions for the Registered Apprenticeship Program, and address these reasons, where possible.

Society accords high value to professions, for which the normal entry requirement is a university degree. However, employment in the trades and services is often not as highly valued. Business is becoming increasingly concerned about "skill shortages" in these career areas.

"Programs which explain career options and opportunities should be developed and presented to students, educators and parents. Success stories in non-university areas of work need to be identified and promoted. Government, business and educators should actively promote the value and benefits of non-university work."

School-to-Work Transition, Alberta Chamber of Commerce Education Task Force, 1995.

Since most school staff are more familiar with the professions, career opportunities in the trade, service and technical areas may not receive the same emphasis in career education and counselling activities. This may result in a large number of students taking university preparation programs in high school. When they do not go to university, **these students often "default" into the workplace with little preparation for any job**. As we move into the "information age," the "knowledge worker" will be in high demand. All workers, regardless of their career, will require high level employability skills. Students should have the support of parents, educators, government and business in giving them the opportunity to be the very best in any career they choose.

All students should have access to effective career education and counselling at an early age so they are able to choose their career directions and prepare for their post-high school life. Career education can be delivered in a variety of ways, but all approaches should involve close cooperation among parents, students, schools and employers.

"As we become independent—proactive, centered in correct principles, value driven and able to organize and execute around the priorities in our life with integrity—we then can choose to become interdependent—capable of building rich, enduring, highly productive relationships with other people . . . Interdependence opens up worlds of possibilities for deep, rich, meaningful associations, for geometrically increased productivity, for serving, for contributing, for learning, for growing."

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, Stephen R. Covey, 1989.

A related career education issue is how to move students from dependent learners to independent and interdependent workers and citizens. Some employers said that too many employees have too little interest in training programs or job enrichment and advancement. On the other hand, most Alberta businesses spend far less on employee training than do competitors in other countries.

A "learning culture" is just beginning in this province. A substantial number of Albertans use libraries and educational television programs, and enroll in adult education courses, but Albertans with less formal education often do not participate in these learning opportunities.

All students need to develop a zest for learning throughout life and to take ownership of their own learning. Employers should take a long term view of human resource development and provide training and support that will help workers contribute to their jobs and society as a whole. Government,

business, employers and other stakeholders, should cooperate to build a learning culture and support the concept of lifelong learning. Human resources development is a key component of the Alberta Advantage.

ACTION PLAN

Immediate Steps

- Alberta Education asks:
  - That Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development, and Alberta Economic Development and Tourism consider how Alberta's human resources strategy could encourage business to provide workplace learning opportunities for students. The MLA Team consultation process and this framework should contribute to the directions in *Prosperity for Albertans*, a paper inviting people to share their advice on the best strategies to keep Alberta's economy growing now and in the future.

Toward the Year 2000

- Alberta Education and Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development will engage in more joint planning so that lifelong learning is more effectively promoted.
- A partnership of labour and business organizations, working through the proposed Career Education Foundation (see Create Community Structures), Alberta Education, Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development and Alberta Economic Development and Tourism will initiate programs, including public relations, to enhance the image of trade, service and technical careers; and education programs related to these careers.
- Alberta Education asks:
  - That school systems, with assistance from Alberta Education, implement a more effective career education program, beginning in elementary schools.
  - That Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development (AECD) continue to provide students/schools with labour market information, using information highway technology, as set out in the AECD business plan, and consider linkages with

employer home pages. This action will contribute to directions set out in the human resources section of the government paper, *Prosperity for Albertans*.

- That business/employers be involved in educational policy development by helping education institutions understand the short- and long-term labour needs of business and effectively communicate these needs to schools.

- That business/employers be involved in educational policy development by helping educational institutions understand the nature of the desired employability skills in the short and long term, including those skills required for effective use of information technology.

- That universities encourage methods courses that instruct teachers in how to enable students to make career-related connections in all courses.

- That faculties of education and the Alberta Teachers' Association continue to take leadership in encouraging teachers to expand and enhance methodologies designed to develop independent and interdependent learners who take ownership of their own learning. This should include an emphasis on alternatives to lecture-type instruction, such as resource-based learning and "teacher as facilitator" models at all levels from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

- That teacher training institutions consider the possibility of including an understanding of entrepreneurial skills in their set of expected teacher competencies.

PROJECT

REVIEW SCHOOL PROGRAMS AND STANDARDS

"Employability skills are the generic skills, attitudes and behaviours that employers look for in new recruits and that they develop through training programs for current employees. In the workplace, as in school, the skills are integrated and used in varying combinations, depending on the nature of the particular job activities."

Employability Skills Profile, Conference Board of Canada, 1993.

From 75 per cent to 95 per cent of Albertans surveyed assigned high priority to having all students develop general employability skills ranging from communication and computer technology skills to developing a positive attitude toward lifelong learning. About 70 per cent of respondents indicated that students should have an understanding and appreciation of entrepreneurship.

The province now has standards for most academic subjects, but with the exception of language arts and social studies, the minimum standards for graduation are not assessed provincially. Some general employability skills, such as knowing how to work independently and as part of a team, are included in specific provincial documents but are not assessed or reported in a structured way. For most students, these skills are taught and evaluated informally in the school setting.

Students in Grade 7 to Grade 12 can develop entrepreneurship and business skills in optional programs such as career and technology studies and the core course, Career and Life Management 20. No plan exists to develop entrepreneurship skills directly in elementary programs, although related activities are found in such subjects as health, social studies and mathematics. A few nonprofit organizations, such as Junior Achievement, offer some excellent activities in entrepreneurship and business awareness, but these are not available in all communities.

The need for improved career counselling is recognized in recent government documents, including the business plans of both Alberta Education and Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development. Career counselling resources have been developed for schools, and there are increased opportunities for teachers and counsellors to take courses in career education. Career awareness is also part of the curriculum, but the outcomes are not clearly defined and little time is spent on career education in most schools.

Employers and educators should work together to identify the general employability, entrepreneurship and career-awareness skills and standards that students should develop in school programs. These should be part of provincial expectations and clearly communicated to schools and students. There should be more structured ways for students to document their achievement of the standards set for employability skills. Employers should be familiar with these expectations and standards and request this information when students apply for jobs.

ACTION PLAN

Immediate Steps

- Alberta Education will complete the development of assessment standards and common provincial assessments instruments for all courses that represent the minimum graduation requirement. These assessment

standards will be reviewed by representatives of business, as well as other stakeholders. Assessments will not necessarily be administered at the provincial level.

Toward the Year 2000

- Alberta Education will review provincial learning expectations and curriculum at all grade levels according to the normal curriculum schedule to determine the degree to which curriculum addresses employability skills. This will be done in cooperation with other provinces and territories as part of current work under the *Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education* and the *Pan-Canadian Protocol for Collaboration on School Curriculum*. A cross section of employers and employer groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce, in addition to students and other Albertans, will be invited to comment on employability skills included in the curriculum.

- As part of the normal curriculum revision cycle, including work with other provinces and territories, Alberta Education will establish and support a public/private sector committee to complete the following tasks:

  - review the current status of entrepreneurship and business awareness and skill development throughout Alberta's Kindergarten to Grade 12 curricula—particularly reviewing social studies and CALM 20 activities. Changes will be made in core curriculum, as required, to ensure that all students acquire a general understanding of how businesses operate and of the role of business in society

  - ensure that career development concepts receive increased and appropriate emphasis in CALM 20

  - ensure that the learning outcomes related to career development concepts in health courses and CALM 20 are clearly stated

  - develop assessment standards and model assessment tools to assess students' understanding of career planning and opportunities in Grade 9 and for CALM 20

- consider having Grade 9 students take a course in which the major focus is career planning in lieu of the present Health and Personal Development 9.

- Alberta Education will set explicit learning expectations and standards for general work experience courses.

- Alberta Education asks that school systems, with Alberta Education assistance, develop employability skills portfolios and encourage and assist all students to maintain such portfolios, beginning in junior high school, at the latest.

PROJECT — DEVELOP CREDENTIALS FOR A GLOBAL ECONOMY

The current graduation requirements, which apply to students who entered Grade 10 in September 1994 or after, were developed in consultation with many Albertans. However, these discussions did not focus specifically on the content of courses like Career and Life Management 20 or the skills that students need to be well-prepared for the workplace. In some cases, employers have little knowledge of the skills expectations and standards required in certain high school courses. Also, there is no standard way to report students' basic employability skills through the current credentialling process.

A related issue is the need to encourage students to develop a range of employability skills and choose part-time work that helps them to develop specific skills. This could be done by providing more recognition for employability skills in credentials, post-secondary admission requirements and scholarships.

ACTION PLAN

Toward the Year 2000

- Alberta Education, with input from business/employers and others, will consider reviewing present diploma requirements to determine if selected knowledge, skills and attitudes currently found in the Enterprise and Innovation, Information Processing, and Career Transitions strands of CTS should be requirements for graduation. To avoid undue "crowding" of the senior high school program, thought will be given to incorporating some of these learnings in Grade 1 to Grade 9, where possible.

- Alberta Education will consider developing a framework within which school boards and employers can work together to develop programs allowing part-time student workers to obtain credits for this work. Schools, students and businesses would participate on a voluntary basis, and credit-bearing, part-time work would be pre-approved by all parties.

- Alberta Education asks:

  - That employer organizations, in cooperation with Alberta Education, maintain an ongoing effort to inform employers about the standards required for graduation.

  - That employer organizations, in cooperation with Alberta Education, encourage employers to request student transcripts and portfolios from all first time job applicants.

  - That the Students Finance Board, Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development, consider developing appropriate scholarships for students with high levels of performance in complementary programs, such as the Career and Technology Studies program and the Registered Apprenticeship Program; and that business also be encouraged to provide such scholarships.

  - That Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development encourage scholarship providers to recognize and value a wider range of skills, including employability skills, as criteria for scholarships.

  - That Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development encourage post-secondary institutions to consider employability skills and assessment of prior learning (challenge assessments) as criteria for program admission.

PROJECT

PROVIDE LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY SUPPORT

Efforts to enhance business involvement in education and to prepare students for the workplace should be within a legislative and policy framework that promotes understanding of and agreement on areas of responsibility for all parties.

About 75 per cent of people surveyed indicated that employers should be more extensively involved in education and a relatively high number of employers—over 40 per cent—also said that they would be interested in providing advice on policy development relating to directions, outputs, curricula and standards in education.

While nearly 70 per cent of educators surveyed felt that employers should have more involvement in education, some educators also indicated that they are unsure of the motives and agenda of the business community. Concerns were raised about sponsorships and cooperative education programs that may not be appropriate because of the lack of balance given to alternative beliefs, attitudes and values. Approximately two-thirds of respondents felt that there should be a policy to ensure that students receive a balanced perspective and that parental permission be obtained before students participate in cooperative education programs. About 75 per cent of those surveyed indicated that a high priority should be given to establishing ethical guidelines to encourage educators to become more involved with employers.

ACTION PLAN

Immediate Steps

- Alberta Education will expand the present Program and Assessment Advisory Committee to include representatives of business and broaden the input. Alberta Education will continue to include representatives of business on specific, subject area advisory groups, including those helping with Western and Pan-Canadian curriculum projects.

Toward the Year 2000

- Alberta Education will develop and/or identify and clearly communicate structures whereby business/employers have input to educational policymaking at all levels.

- Alberta Education will continue to survey employers, as well as other stakeholders, regarding their satisfaction with involvement in educational decision-making, and will target improvements for satisfaction levels.

- Consideration will be given to changing the *School Act* legislation so that authority to approve work sites, and direct students to them, is delegated to school boards.

- Alberta Education will modify its policy on career counselling so that the policy sets out the requirements, principles and beliefs for:

  - career counselling to be distinct from guidance counselling

  - schools to involve employers and entrepreneurs in school activities

  - schools to provide career counselling, and to do so through a variety of models, including joint ventures with Alberta Advanced Education and Career Development, local staff and/or private venture service providers. The model developed by the Calgary Educational Partnership Foundation provides an excellent example

  - students to develop an educational program/career plan in Grade 9 that is to be updated annually; and signed annually by a parent and the school principal, or designate

  - schools to be encouraged to track students (minimally, a statistically representative sample, and ideally, all students) for a minimum of two years after leaving senior high school, and to survey employers and students regarding satisfaction with the students' preparation for work

  - tracking information to be incorporated in ongoing research that examines the school-to-work transition experiences of Alberta students.

- Alberta Education asks:

  - That business/employers be involved in educational policy development by:

    - helping educational institutions understand the short- and long-term labour needs of business; and effectively communicating these needs to the schools

    - helping educational institutions understand the nature of the desired employability skills in the short and long term

    - being active participants in school councils.

    - participating in an annual conference sponsored by the proposed Career Education Foundation to review progress in implementing the Framework for Enhancing Business Involvement in Education, and to establish new directions.

  - That each school system be encouraged to adopt and implement a policy respecting the involvement of local businesses in education. This policy should address such topics as partnerships, sponsorships and other ethical issues by affirming the Conference Board of Canada's *Ethical Guidelines for Business–Education Partnerships* (see Appendix B), or by modifying it in a manner appropriate to the communities served. School system policies should be consistent with the Framework for Enhancing Business Involvement in Education.

Working Together to Create a Learning Future

The strength of Alberta's economy depends on a capable and highly skilled workforce. As we move toward an "information economy," these skills are becoming increasingly complex and are changing rapidly. School programs must change to place more emphasis on lifelong learning and on encouraging young people to develop the skills they need on an ongoing basis.

"We believe:

All students must have strong reading, writing and math skills with which to analyze data and develop ideas and inferences.

The education system must provide our society with creative and critical thinkers and problem-solvers, who are prepared for the world of work . . .

The education system must provide opportunities for students to acquire the entrepreneurial and technical skills and work habits required for success in the rapidly chainging, high-tech global economy."

Meeting the Challenge II: Three-year Business Plan for Education, 1995/96–1997/98.

Preparing young people for the challenges and opportunities of the workplace must be a cooperative effort. Through schools and other educational agencies, government clearly has a role to play. But so do business, parents, community and professional groups. Students also have a responsibility to take ownership of their learning, to become independent and interdependent learners who are well prepared for the world of today and tomorrow.

This framework sets out a plan of action to give young Albertans the education and support they need to contribute to our economy and our society. It focuses on ways to prepare students for the workplace by enhancing business involvement in education. Carrying out this plan will take the cooperative effort of many groups and many people. The government urges all Albertans to support this major initiative. By working together we can build a better future for young people throughout the province.

APPENDIX A
BUSINESS INVOLVEMENT ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERS

Mr. Denis Herard, MLA
Calgary Egmont, Chair

Mr. Hung Pham, MLA
Calgary Montrose

Mr. G. E. (Jerry) Pink
Alberta Chamber of Commerce

Mr. A. G. (Tony) Grace
Alberta Chamber of Resources

Mr. Ron Carrick
Initially with the Alberta Food Processors Association
Now with the Alberta Food Brokers Association

Mr. Johan Berns
Alberta Restaurant and Food Services Association

Ms Bev Sillito
Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Alberta Chapter

Mr. Jim Fargey
Canadian Manufacturers' Association

Mr. Ian Harris
Retail Council of Canada, Western Region

Mr. Rick Roman
Tourism Industry Association of Alberta

Mrs. Nancy Rempel
Alberta School Boards Association

Ms Rita Dempsey
Alberta Home and School Councils' Association

Mr. McLean Millar
Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board

Mr. Kurt Moench
Alberta Teachers' Association

Mr. Erik Schmidt
Advanced Education and Career Development

Dr. David Young
Conference of Alberta School Superintendents

Dr. Roger Palmer
Alberta Education

Mr. Jay Krysler
Alberta Economic Development and Tourism

Mr. Keith Wagner
Alberta Education
(Facilitator)

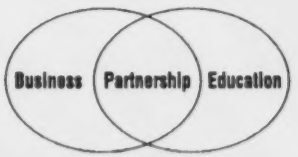
Mr. Terry Kernaghan
Learning Technologies West
(Facilitator)

Ethical Guidelines for Business–Education Partnerships©

Why Ethical Guidelines?

The purpose of Ethical Guidelines is to describe for current and prospective partners the key components of an ethical business–education partnership and to provide them with a rational basis for addressing ethical issues that relate to the ideals, obligations and effects of their partnerships.

Ethical partnerships safeguard learners' interests, build trust and mutual respect, regulate themselves, and make informed decisions that benefit everyone involved.



The Business–Education Partnerships Forum encourages current and prospective partners to use the Ethical Guidelines as a framework for dialogue and discovery in creating, developing and maintaining sustainable business–education partnerships.

The Conference Board of Canada
Information for Sound Decisions Since 1954

Business–Education Partnerships Forum

The Forum is a multi-stakeholder group committed to promoting ethical and effective business–education partnerships. It developed Ethical Guidelines for Business–Education Partnerships in consultation with the Corporate Council on Education and more than 200 representatives from businesses, education institutions, teachers' organizations, student groups and government organizations across Canada.

Member Organizations

AGT Limited
AIESEC Canada, Inc.
Alberta Education
Avenor Inc.
Bank of Montreal
Bell Canada
Bishops College, St. John's
Calgary Board of Education
Canada Post Corporation
Canadian Microelectronics Corporation
Canadian National Railways
Canadian Partnership Network
Government of New Brunswick
Human Resources Development Canada
Imasco Limited
Imperial Oil Limited
Investors Group Inc.
National Defence
Noranda Forest Inc.
Northern Telecom Limited
Pitney Bowes of Canada Ltd.
Royal Bank of Canada
Shell Canada Ltd.
South Simcoe Public School
Syncrude Canada Ltd.
TransAlta Utilities Corporation
TransCanada PipeLines
Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat

How to Use the Ethical Guidelines

Ethical Guidelines is a tool for partners that helps them make ethical decisions, while leaving them free to express their individuality through their partnerships. It outlines criteria for business–education partnerships that guide partners in making informed decisions.

These guidelines are not exhaustive: they stimulate dialogue. Partners discuss what the guidelines mean and analyse their appropriateness and importance to the partnership. They then explore how they can work collaboratively to establish a strong ethical basis for their business–education parnership.

How Do These Guidelines Fit with Organizations' Codes of Ethics, Practice and Conduct?

The guidelines serve to complement existing codes of ethics, practice and conduct. Current and prospective partners can use the guidelines to address aspects of their partnership relationship that may not be treated in their organizations' own codes.

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Information for Sound Decisions Since 1954

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Ethical Guidelines for Business–Education Partnerships

Business–education partnerships are mutually beneficial relationships between employers and educators that are designed to enhance learning for students and other learners. They may involve other education stakeholders as partners, including students, employees, parents, communities, labour, and government organizations. Most business–education partnerships are co-operative relationships in which partners share values, objectives, human, material or financial resources, roles and responsibilities in order to achieve desired learning outcomes.

Canadian employers and educators support business–education partnerships that:

- Enhance the quality and relevance of education for learners
- Mutually benefit all partners
- Treat fairly and equitably all those served by the partnership
- Provide opportunities for all partners to meet their shared social responsibilities toward education
- Acknowledge and celebrate each partner's contributions through appropriate forms of recognition
- Are consistent with the ethics and core values of all partners
- Are based on the clearly defined expectations of all partners
- Are based on shared or aligned objectives that support the goals of the partner organizations
- Allocate resources to complement and not replace public funding for education
- Measure and evaluate partnership performance to make informed decisions that ensure continuous improvement
- Are developed and structured in consultation with all partners
- Recognize and respect each partner's expertise
- Identify clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all partners
- Involve individual participants on a voluntary basis

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This document was developed by the Business–Education Partnerships Forum, a program of the National Business and Education Centre, The Conference Board of Canada.